

## Non-gluten wheat sensitivity may be linked to autoimmunity

22 November, 2016



Some people with MS have described finding benefit in switching to a gluten free diet, however, there is no strong scientific evidence that gluten contributes to the risk of developing MS or the frequency of relapses or severity of MS. No clinical studies have yet shown that a gluten free diet can improve clinical outcomes in MS.

Now a German researcher, Professor Detlef Schuppan of Johannes Gutenberg University, has suggested that some people with non-coeliac wheat

sensitivity may in fact be sensitive to another component of wheat rather than gluten. Animal studies have suggested that this sensitivity may be linked to autoimmune diseases such as MS.

Professor Schuppan's research has been covered in the media following his presentation at the at the United European Gastroenterology Week conference recently.

Coeliac disease is a disease where the immune system reacts abnormally to gluten which is found in wheat products. For people with coeliac disease, even small amounts of gluten can damage the lining of the small intestine (bowel). However, many people who do not have a diagnosis of coeliac disease, also find that eliminating gluten-containing products from their diets can improve certain gastrointestinal symptoms.

Professor Schuppan has presented evidence that one family of molecules found in wheat, known as amylase-trypsin inhibitors (ATIs) may be responsible for non-coeliac wheat insensitivity in some people. His work has shown that ATIs can increase susceptibility to MS-like and lupus-like disease in mice and ATIs can affect the function of the immune system in ways that may make autoimmunity more likely.

The data that Professor Schuppan has presented so far relates to animal studies, and the researchers have yet to demonstrate in humans that ATIs can contribute to the onset or severity of autoimmune diseases.

Professor Schuppan is now planning to investigate this further in clinical studies in humans to explore the role that ATIs may play in chronic health conditions in more detail.

The research has not yet progressed far enough to recommend that people with MS should change their diets. Anyone who feels that they may have food intolerances should consult carefully with their healthcare providers and seek a referral to an accredited dietician for further investigation and advice.

Combining a healthy, balanced diet with medication where appropriate and as recommended by your neurologist, is likely to represent the best course of action for the majority of people with MS to minimise the impact of MS. The United European Gastroenterology Week press release can be found [here](#)